



By Racquel Palmese

Winners have been chosen for the 2011 Green California Leadership Awards. In cooperation with the Board of Advisors for the Green California Summit, the awards were established to

recognize outstanding environmental achievements by cities, state agencies and other government entities in California.

Covering categories ranging from climate change to purchasing, the awards offer a unique and rare public recognition of public sector accomplishments in sustainability. All nominated projects must be publicly financed and executed, and must have provided a measurable benefit to the natural or human environment.

The awards will be presented during the a reception at the Green California Summit and Exposition on April 19 at the Sacramento Convention Center.

“There are many green heroes in state and local government,” said Carl Smith, Green Technology editor in chief. “These awards are not so much a competition as an opportunity for the Summit to recognize as many of these individuals as possible, and to spotlight achievements in communities from all parts of the state.”

Award Winners

Climate Change: The Climate Change award honors initiatives to reduce human contributions to greenhouse gases, and the City of Tulare is being recognized for its Energy Efficiency Strategy (TEES). The TEES initiative includes a variety of programs that are structured to reduce the overall amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) generated by the community. In Tulare, municipal operations, retail and commercial operations and the residential sector each take steps and participate in a meaningful way towards reducing GHGs. TEES includes four biogas fuel cells in Tulare’s fuel cell plant, creating 1.2 MW of energy each day. Alternative fuels are used in the city’s fleets, and Tulare has completed retrofits on all its municipal facilities. Looking toward the future, the city is retrofitting all of its city-owned streetlights and building a 1.0MW solar project at its wastewater treatment plant.

Energy Innovation: The Energy Innovation Award goes to the California Department of General Services (DGS) for its ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) Small Building Program. Using ARRA funding, DGS instituted a revolving loan program for energy projects on state-owned buildings less than 50,000 square feet, of which there are over 11,000 in California. During phase 1 of the program, energy efficiency measures are being implemented

in 452 buildings belonging to six state agencies. The retrofits are expected to save almost \$1.5 million. The goals of the Small Building Program are to not only save energy but to create jobs, make investments in economically distressed areas, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve indoor air quality, stimulate the economy and make investments that have long-term economic benefit. The program has involved collaboration between multiple state agencies, private sector utilities and municipal utilities.

Green Building: California government has served as a model for what can be achieved in green building. This year, the City of Sacramento's Community Reinvestment Capital Improvement Project (CRCIP) receives the Green Building award. The project, completed in 2010, entailed the new construction of five LEED Silver or Gold (green building designations from the US Green Building Council) city facilities. These include three public libraries, one state-of-the-art multi-use gymnasium and one community center expansion with a performing arts events center. The planning of the project was a collaborative effort that brought together the local community and public entities to develop the vision of economic stability, environmental sustainability and social equity in making the project a reality. In addition to "leading by example" as the city develops its internal infrastructure, the project also forwards the goals of the City of Sacramento's 2011 Sustainability Implementation Plan by reducing the City's Greenhouse Gas Emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

Purchasing: Procuring green products entails first determining what it means for a product to be "green." This year's award-winner in the category of Purchasing, the City and County of San Francisco, has pioneered a green purchasing program that is being emulated by many other cities and communities. In San Francisco, the Department of the Environment (SFE) and the Office of Contract Administration have taken lead roles in implementing the City's Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance. Since the ordinance passed in 2005, SFE has created a list of over 1,000 green products for City staff with environmentally preferable specifications for 34 green product subcategories, and 13 citywide commodities contracts. Overall purchases of Required Green Products were almost \$7 million. Seventy-nine percent of purchases for computers, 72 percent of janitorial papers, 78 percent of janitorial cleaners, 50 percent of lighting products and 93 percent of office papers meet strict environmental standards. In 2010, SFE rolled out a new website that lists all of the City's green products and specifications, along with vendor information.

Waste Management: The Waste Management award goes to the County of Santa Cruz for its Zero Waste Program. Under the program, the county passed the threshold of 70 percent waste diversion, one of the highest diversion rates in California. Recent efforts have included restrictions on polystyrene and single-use bags, a thriving green business program, increased waste diversion in the hospitality and tourism industry, recycling for special events, businesses and multi-family housing complexes, retail “takeback” programs for fluorescent light bulbs, pharmaceuticals and used motor oil, expanded recycling of construction and demolition debris, a food waste composting program for local businesses and support for home-based composting and a one-of-a-kind agricultural plastic film recycling program. Santa Cruz organizes frequent cleanup programs at local beaches, streams and other public areas in partnership with local environmental organizations, and special events to promote environmental awareness including one of California’s largest Earth Day celebrations.

Transportation: The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has won the Transportation award for its innovative recycled paving project using Cold Foam Recycling on storm damaged state Highway 84 on Ryer's Island. The original repair strategy was to remove the top eight feet of the roadway and reconstruct it with asphalt concrete and base materials, but it was rejected by the Central Valley Flood Protection Board as a danger to existing levees; moreover, it would be logistically impossible to get the materials to the island. The team decided to instead replace the top eight feet of the pavement for the entire three miles, and to repair the severe areas of failed slopes, with geosynthetic reinforced earth. With the Cold Foam In-Place Recycling strategy employed for the project, no asphalt or underlying aggregates were wasted. Natural resources were preserved, landfill space was not used, and almost no materials were imported to or exported from the project site. In-Place Recycling saved the taxpayers over \$2.42 million.

Water Management: The Water Management award, recognizing significant savings in water conservation and efficiency, goes to the City of Fillmore for its Water Recycling Project. Since 1955, the City of Fillmore has treated wastewater at a plant that was permitted to discharge effluent to the Santa Clara River. This \$72 million project replaced an existing plant with a new, state-of-the-art water recycling facility that ended the practice of river discharges and enabled full-scale reuse. Because of the new facility, not only is there is no more river discharge of effluent, there is 100 percent effluent reuse. What has resulted is a project that goes far beyond wastewater treatment and through its various educational and community programs,

encompasses recreation, education, transportation, entertainment, environmental preservation, sustainability, and quality of life for the City of Fillmore and County of Ventura.

Green Culture: The Green Culture Award recognizes systemic efforts within an organization or community to promote the understanding and application of sustainability concepts. The City of Pasadena receives this award for its far-reaching Green City Action Plan. Based on the framework of the United Nations Green Cities Urban Environmental Accords, Pasadena's ambitious Green City Action Plan follows seven major themes: energy, waste reduction, urban design, urban nature, transportation, environmental health and water conservation. To engage the greater community in implementing the plan, Pasadena created an interdepartmental Green Team as well as a City Council-appointed Environmental Advisory Commission, which meets monthly to ensure public dialogue and to forge continued partnerships with community groups, residents and businesses in every corner of the city. In 2010 Pasadena finalized its Green City Indicators Project, which produced a set of metrics to measure, monitor and report quantifiable results of its sustainability efforts to the community.

